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a feasible solution of the problem in hand. Difficulties, however, are not improbable in securing the prescribed guarantee funds: in this respect amendments are likely to be called for.

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## THE FAILURE OF THE TELEGRAPHERS' STRIKE

The defeat of the striking telegraphers is the outcome in the main of two significant facts—they distrusted their leaders and they put too much faith in the public.

Distrust of leadership precipitated the fight at a time when the union was wholly unprepared to cope with its powerful antagonists. The walk-out against President Small's orders gave the officers of the union no time to formulate a deliberate plan of action or to collect even a respectable strike fund. The union thus grappled with the strongest capitalistic interests in the country, itself undirected and unarmed.

Once out, distrust of leadership again destroyed the best hope of some measure of success for the workers. Under the conditions the union could not reasonably hope to escape entire defeat in a lingering fight. The strategic thing was to make a complete demonstration of strength and then to seek intervention if possible. But all official talk of arbitration was vociferously howled down by the crowd and intervention by officials of the American Federation or of the government was rejected with scorn. The officers of the union were obliged to wait till the men "cooled down," while time forced the union to become a pauper and demonstrated that, with strike-breakers and machines, the companies could get along indefinitely.

Throughout the struggle the rule of the rank and file increased if possible the initial handicap on the union. The officers could spring no coup because they could not work deliberately and secretly. The other unions could give no efficient and persistent aid because there was no stable point for its application. It is a significant fact in this connection that while the sympathy accorded the telegraphers by the other unions of the country was all that could be desired, their money contributions in aid of the strikers fell much short of what was expected of them.

The climax of this ruinous policy of insubordination came with

the deposition of President Small. He had dared to face and state the facts and to advise the only course which at any time after the first weeks of the strike had been open to the strikers. The union had already shown itself to be woefully undisciplined and therefore inefficient; it now advertised itself to the companies and to the world at large as a leaderless crowd.

In contrast with the union the discipline shown by the officers and stockholders of the companies was striking and undoubtedly contributed most effectively to success. If the companies were not prepared for the fight, if they wavered in their plan of action, if the officers were not competent or trusted, if the stockholders were disgruntled at any time, no whisper of it all reached the strikers to comfort them. The companies faced the fight to all appearances prepared, unwavering, and confident, with no discord inside the ranks. Under such circumstances the outcome could not at any time be doubtful, barring the spread of the strike to other organizations of workers or public interference.

And what of the public? It was undoubtedly to the public that those who conducted the strike looked for the salvation of the union. They figured apparently that the public would not brook interruption of telegraphic service and that if they could prove their demands to be just, while avoiding all cause for offense, the public would see justice dealt out to them. The desire not to offend the public, therefore, dictated the conduct of the strike, so far as the responsible officers were concerned. This policy was doubtless the second main cause of the strike failure, paradoxical and deplorable as the fact may seem.

In accordance with this policy of conciliation the men allowed the companies to secure strike-breakers and machines unhindered, for it was to be a strike without violence. In accordance with this policy also, they allowed workers engaged in operating wires leased by brokers and great producers and traders to sign individual contracts, regardless of the attitude of the telegraph companies. Here was a fatal mistake in policy. With these lines in operation the "public" most vitally and seriously concerned in maintaining commercial telegraphic service uninterrupted were relieved from the necessity of exercising pressure on the companies. The workers realized this as the strike progressed and the cry arose that the leased-wire men should be called out. But here again fear of alienating the public stood in the way. Would the public tolerate

this deliberate and wholesale breaking of contract, even to win the strike? The workers thought not.

As to the public at large, it failed to work up heat regarding the sufferings of men and women supposed to be striking for \$30 a week, and the unionists soon discovered that so long as men in general felt or feared no serious inconvenience to themselves little was to be hoped from their sympathy. And it might be asked pertinently what use would the sympathy of the public have been to the strikers in face of the companies' determined assumption that they were managing their own affairs and dealing with their own employees?

The telegraphers have been taking the drubbing that is likely to come to young and inexperienced unions made up of capable and self-dependent individuals. Youth and individual intelligence account very largely for the lack of discipline and the naive faith that have been the prime causes of their undoing. There has been, however, another and special factor which, in Chicago at least, goes some way to account for the fatal insubordination of the rank and file. This is socialistic talk and socialistic influence. While the leaders of the strike were impatiently waiting for the majority of the men to cool down, they encouraged daily mass-meetings of the rank and file. These meetings were socialistic opportunities. "The officers are your creatures; do not let them betray you; make them do your bidding," harangued the orators on these occasions. And the crowd did it.

The companies now hold the whip hand, but it surely is not the part of wisdom to multiply lashes. It seems demonstrated that there are not at present expert non-union telegraphers enough to fill the strikers' places. The companies will therefore in the end re-employ the majority of the workers who went out on strike. In view of this fact, if they are wisely led, they will adopt a conciliatory policy. But even if this wisdom fails the situation is not without its compensations for the workers. The whole experience ought to teach them several things well worth knowing. They ought to sense the necessity, in a fight, of leadership and of individual subordination; they should learn that there is no such fighting entity as the public at large, and if, beyond this, they learn that socialism is not the shortest road to more bread and butter, they will not have fought and suffered in vain.

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